



Pass Christian, Mississippi

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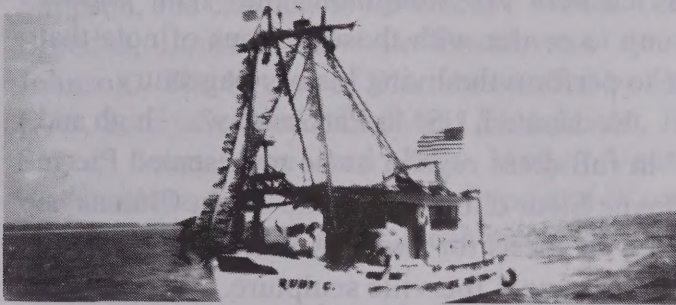
Tricentennial

Colonization Tricentennial
Committee

Volume 2, Issue Five

April 9, 1999

Blessing of the Fleet



The 23rd Annual Fleet Blessing is set for Sunday, April 25, 1999. Chairman Chip McDermott announced that boat judging will be under the auspices of Supervisor David LaRosa, State House Speaker Tim Ford, Justice Court Judge Diane Ladner, State Representative Charlie Williams of Senatobia, MS, Sun Herald Reporter Keith Burton, and WLOX's TV Presenter Tran Pham Bui.

The boat blessings this year will be administered to by a host of clerics including Monsignor Jim Russell, St. Paul Catholic Church, Rev. Chris Colby, Trinity Episcopal Church, Rev. Kyle Bennett, St. Patrick's Episcopal Church of Long Beach, and Father Bob Shay of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Pineville. The customary "Flower Wreath" will be tossed from John Dane's motor vessel, the *SHOWDOWN* as a cast of VIPs herald the boats in review.

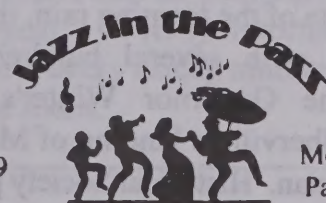
In a change from the traditional King Fisher and Queen Fisherette, the committee has spread the joy of royalty upon Melissa Malley as she reigns as "1999 Queen of the Blessing".

Jazz in the Pass

The "Jazz in the Pass" Music Festival scheduled for Saturday, May 8, 1999, is moving ahead in "High Fashion." This event has been in planning for nearly a year with Chairperson Jennie Lou Mintz plugging all available resources. She is excited by the program confirmations of six hours of a variety of jazz music performances which will culminate with a jam session. The all day event will be held at Memorial Park on Scenic Drive at Fleitas Avenue next to the VFW Hall and guarantees great food booths, "suds" and soda, contests, prizes-prizes-prizes, and around the park Second Lining.

One of the jazz groups is S.P.I.C.E. (*Spirited People Interjecting Creative Energies*) which is promoted by Ron "Cadillac" Henry. He assures us that his troupe of players include trumpet, alto-sax, tenor-sax, base, drums, and keyboards. They will present a musical spectacular of Jazz, Blues, and Dixieland "jus' like the Capt'n use to play!" They have recorded copies of world famous saxophonist Captain John Handy and jazz pianist "Joe B." Jackson. Both who are noted for having had the only New Orleans styled Jazz Funerals in Mississippi -- held right here in Pass Christian.

Order your T-shirt



May 8, 1999

Memorial Park
Pass Christian

(Continued next Page)

Tricentennial 1699-1999
Pass Christian, Mississippi

(Jazz in the Pass -- continued)

Not to slight the younger set, Pass Christian Schools Music Director Tim Farnsworth has organized a Pass Jazz Ensemble from the Middle and High schools. They promise a "flair that will tilt the air" which will start the day's programming at 11 A.M.

Other scheduled groups include Mo Calvert's Mississippi Mud-Bugs, the St. Tammany Jazzers, Perfect Mixx, and Doc Baldera's Dixie Dots of New Orleans. Sending a hand in support have been Ronnie Kole and Pete Fountain.

What's a Jazz Festival in the Park without food. There will be a large selection from some of the Pass's local chefs. ranging from hot dogs, hamburgers, barbecued ribs and chicken, muffaletas, gyros, and baklava to salve the sweet-toothed palates.

A special commemorative Jazz T-Shirt is on sale for \$12 -- while they last. Be a winner and buy your shirt early to "wear at the park and give you a spark." Shirts are available from the Chamber of Commerce, Hancock Bank, or send your order form to POB 354. Be sure to bring a lounge chair for your special comfort.

Umbrellas anybody? Jennie Lou is giving workshops on how to make Jazz umbrellas and Jazz Hankies. These are scheduled for April 13 and 14 and will include sessions on how to high-step, zig-zag, and Jazzle to Second-Line music. Interested Jazzers should call Jennie Lou.

ALSO, Get involved in the fun first hand by joining the Jazz Volunteers! Jennie Lou -- needs YOU! Call her at 452-7779.

D'Iberville Landing Banquet

In spite of the teaming rain, the Yacht Club was packed with several hundred local folks attending the Governor Winter's Banquet to celebrate D'Iberville's landing of March 30, 1699 at Pass Christian. Historical Society president John

Lutenbacher conducted the celebration and also memorialized the Pass Christian "*Friendship Flag*." Dayton Robinson gave a short heritage review of the 11 flags that flew over the Pass as each banner was presented by members of the Pass's Boy Scout Troop. Governor Winters gave an interesting rundown on all the U.S. presidents who visited the Coast in particular those who vacationed at Pass Christian.

The Celebrity Reenactments that were scheduled for West Marina Harbor were canceled due to the heavy rain and will be rescheduled after Pass teachers Al Roughton and Tim Ladner regroup to confer with those persons of note that were to perform the living history pageantry.

Undaunted, USM's Pat Smith was "high and dry" in full dress regalia as he represented Pierre Lemoyne Sieur d'Iberville at the Yacht Club as he posed with guests for photo shots next to Michelle Smith's bronze d'Iberville sculpture.

St. Paddy's Parade

The past St. Paddy's 5th Annual Parade was fun for all. In spite of the winds and the early threat of rain everyone who showed up had a great time. There was "Cornbeef n Cabbage" served after St. Paul's 11 a.m. Mass where "Colleen" Rachal McDonald greeted the lunch crowd. There was another "Cornbeef n Cabbage" spread for the VIP's who toasted Grandmarshal Chip McDermott. And after the parade at Toby's there was more "Cornbeef n Cabbage" and Green Beer for all parade goers.

The usual toast at Russell's Shell Station was hosted by Alice Russell and Jerry Rooney with the "Krewe of Russell" cheering on. Karen Parcell conveyed the Colleen by convertible, followed by the banner carriers, flag carriers, and Major Jim Cerra waving his Italian colors.

(Please continue to page 3)

(St. Paddy's -- continued)

These marchers were followed by the Air Force Junior ROTC color guard and close-order Drill Team headed by Major Tim Krause with Linda Adams, Tempest Wilkerson, Angela Coster, Samantha Polkey, Rocky Murphy, Dylan Murphy, Selina Sullivan, Marc Johnson, Chris Devail, Lawrence Marchetta, and Lucy Perniciaro.

Grandmarshal Chip McDermott led the tuxedoed VIP's all carrying and dispersing floral gifts from their flower adorned canes. Some of the politicians included Mayor Billy McDonald, State Senator Scottie Cuevas, Representative Jim Simpson, and candidates for elective offices Terry Broadus, Louis Elias, Jake Erwin, and Jimmy Johnson. The Krewe of Blarney was led by Dan Ellis, Sonny Scardino, Lark and J.J. Johnson, Jim Sager, Jenny Lou and Bob Mintz, Vonnie Bodenschatz, Edna Szymanski, Lynn and Warren Doussan, and many other local members of the cortege.

Skip Barrett led his Krewe of Algiers membering about 30 jubilant bead and cabbage tossers. Other stops along Scenic Drive included City Hall where the stands were filled with excited youngsters and young adults with Down Syndrome, and following the stop at Miramar Nursing Home to greet and serenade the elder citizens housed there, the fifty or so Special Olympics group joined the returning paraders as they followed the St. Stanislaus Band led by Director Ed Grotkowski.

The Krewe of Blarney Halfast Walkin' Klub wishes to thank all the folks who turned out to cheer all the "Happy Irish" and the one Italian.

And a special thanks to Vonnie Bodenschatz for heading up the team that prepared hotdogs and softdrinks for the young adults with Down Syndrome condition.

Around Town

Everyone wants to meet Gwendolyn Canon since the Sun Herald presented a wonderful release on her art style of sculpturing and paintings.

George Washington Bicentennial Commemoration

A public invitation. On Monday April 12, 1999 at 2pm, on the grounds of Trinity Church, two tree plantings will be dedicated as living memorials to George Washington by the Mississippi State Society, Daughters of the American Revolution. State Chairman of Commemorative Events Marianne Rankin has been promoting public awareness throughout Mississippi and is a Washington Family Descendant. Acutely aware of the meaning of national, state, and local historic heritage, Marianne is a member of the Clower Family, owners of the oldest antebellum home in Gulfport, known as the *Calvit/Clower Home of Mississippi City*.

A Mount Vernon Red Maple will be dedicated by Mrs. Vincent Scoper, MSSDAR Regent, and her husband, Senator Vincent G. Scoper from Laurel, Mississippi.

This planting will be followed by a dedication of a George Washington Tulip Poplar by Marianne Rankin and Mrs. A.G. Thomas, Jr., Regent, Iklanna Chapter, also a Washington Family Descendant.

You are Invited to a Wine & Cheese Party!

The Friends of the Library cordially invite you to join the Friends in the Conference Room, Pass Christian Public Library from 5 to 7pm on Friday, April 16, 1999.

New president Virgil Harris invites you to learn more about the Friends who support the Public Library in many ways, most recently with new computer chairs and the painting of the library building last year. Weekly informative coffee meetings are held every Friday morning at 10am in the Conference room.

Lighthouse News

After review of a number of possible sites along the Scenic Drive ridge, site selection has narrowed to determining a placement at the West Harbor Parking Lot. As a prerequisite, the site committee, having received conceptual approval from the Board of Aldermen, has been busy making presentations to various Boards and Commissions. These conferrals have resulted in soliciting interesting considerations which must be resolved -- such as: who or what corporate body will own the reconstructed tower, will it have a functional light, cost and types of insurance, upkeep and maintenance of the tower, will the interior have a means of ascending to the top, will it be open to the public -- and undoubtedly there will be more questions before the final site positioning in the parking lot is finalized.

In the meantime, arrangements have been made for contributions of \$100 or more to be eligible for tax write-off with the help of the Pass Rotarians who have permitted the use of the "Rotary Trust Fund."

Geri Dendis - Local Artist

Geri Dendis has resided in the Pass Christian area for the past 22 years and is a member of several local art associations. Following her retirement after 12 years of teaching history at the Middle School, Geri returned to her latent interest in drawing and painting. As a Boardmember of the Tricentennial Committee she was motivated to advance the Lighthouse Reconstruction Project. This resulted in painting "*The Pass Christian Lighthouse 1831 - 1882.*"

Copies of **The Lighthouse** may be obtained by calling Geri at 452-7384. The original was given to the Tricentennial Committee as part of its traveling exhibit and is currently on display at *Valentino's*.

New Historic Releases

On this past February 11, the *Mississippi Department of Marine Resources* introduced a host of contributors to the writings contained in the first two volumes of a series of four. Representing Pass Christian's heritage submittals were Adele Bielenberg, Billy Bourdin, Dan Ellis, Murray Keel, and J.J. Lassabe. The books are filled with stories of history, art, culture, coastal environment, and marine resource data pertaining to the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast. Representative material was written for all of the communities throughout the 300 years commencing from the colonial periods onward, and includes early American Indian history.

The books are in process of dissemination to all state school and public libraries. Those writers and guests present at the special program held at the DMR building in Biloxi received their copies of Volume I and II. Volumes III and IV will soon be off the press.

Queen of the Fleet

Coast history documenter and writer, Russell Barnes reports the ownership trail of the famous *Queen of the Fleet*. Barnes' affidavit shows that the famed schooner was built in 1891 by Biloxi shipbuilder William N. Johnson who was its first owner. The fishing schooner was noted for its "nearly spotless racing record throughout the 1890s and early 1900s until being replaced by the larger, faster schooners built for the Biloxi fisheries during World War I."

There has been a long local interest in the schooner which is pictured in *Billy Bourdin's Photo Collection*. It was purchased in 1895 by Mrs. Louisa J. Bidwell, the third owner of the "Union Quarters" manor at 243 East Scenic Drive. She was linked romantically with Captain John T. McDonald to whom she gave the boat. It was lost at sea on October 16, 1923.

The 42-foot vessel had a breadth of 16 feet with two masts and was reconditioned by new owner McDonald in June 1921 when the rig was changed to gasoline propulsion.

Old Pass Families

There were many immigrants to the Pass before and immediately following the Civil War era. Persons fitting the category of "old families of Pass Christian" would have remained to produce second, third, and even more generations of citizens who still live here in the Pass. Long active in community and church organizations, Mary Catherine Ward has shared some of her ancestry file pertaining to two of the "old families" of Pass Christian.

The Hansons

Norwegian born Christopher Hanson married the Irish eyes of his heart, Ellen Hanigan, giving birth to John Edward Hanson in 1862. Following highschool, J. Edward understudied as a pharmacist with several druggists from New Orleans and Biloxi.

Dr. J. Edward Hanson married Julia Miller Taylor of New Orleans whose folks were Charles F. Miller and Dora Brown. The Hansons operated the Hanson Drug Store which was acquired from Dr. Lemon of Biloxi in 1889. In addition to drugs and medicines, cigars and tobaccos; they also sold souvenir novelties such as crab-shell pincushions and oyster shells painted with local marine scenes. Because he was an ardent fisher, he also had boats for hire from the back pier of the drugstore where local seafood dealer, B. Bojianish also sold fresh marine produce.

Their son, Herbert Hampton Hanson, born in 1893, worked in the Hanson Drug Store in addition to establishing his own business.

The Courtenays

Businessman and contractor Cloiselle Courtenay not only built the Courtenay family residence at 505 East Scenic Drive and the family business, the "Courtenay Store," but many others, including a number of houses which were damaged

or demolished by the hurricane of 1915, a storm that was almost as fierce as Hurricane Camille.

Although the family tombs are in St. Paul Catholic Cemetery, Cloiselle contributed lands now called the Courtenay Cemetery located northwest of Pass Christian off Espy Avenue and Kux Road. This heartfelt donation was for those deceased persons in need of a "Resting Place."

Following Cloiselle's demise, son Thomas Victor Courtenay took over the management of the store. T.V. Courtenay married Mamie Carmody Farrell in 1889.

The joining of Hansons and Courtenays took place when Herbert Hampton Hanson married Catherine Madeline Courtenay. They produced four children, Herbert C. Hanson, Julia Cerra, Irene Hodges, and Mary Catherine Ward who continue their heritage lines in Pass Christian.

It goes without saying that there are many more "old family" lineages in our community in addition to many persons with a myriad of last names who say to Mary Catherine, "*Hi, Cousin!*"

Blessing of the Fleet

The Blessings have their historical origins since 1937 as reported in the "Tarpon-Beacon."

"For the first time in the history of fishing here, the shrimp fleet will be blessed Sunday by Father Hayes, who recently was appointed to take the place of Father Leech. At this writing about 75 trawlers are here, many more are expected before Sunday. On account of the large number of boats it is presumed Father Hayes will bless them as a group, however, this has not been fully decided.

The Blessings continued for about 20 years thereafter, however, they were held intermittently for the ensuing 20 years. In 1977, the Pass Chamber of Commerce revived the traditional observance once more. Ed Alley, then Chief of Police, rounded up over thirty boats.

(Continue to page 6)

(History of Blessing of the Fleet - continued)

The following year, Chief Alley bettered himself and promoted the first Queen of the Fleet contest inviting every young damsel of Harrison County to submit their picture for the competition. The Chief, as Chairman of the Blessing, corralled over a hundred boats and set aside part of the area for a street dance. He also promoted 1400 pounds of free seafood. The Rev. Joseph Howze, Bishop of Biloxi, was assisted by Rev. John O'Brien of St. Paul's Church, to administer the Blessings.

Over 4000 spectators viewed the freshly painted and beautifully decorated boats composed of all kinds and sizes. Melanie Fayard reigned as Queen of the First Festival. Thereafter, a bevy of beauties reigned for the next six years. The lovely ladies were Dee Dee Torgeson, Charlotte Jones, Desiree Davion, Kimberly Cunningham, Melanie Bratton, and Lamar Billups.

In 1985, the custom of selecting King Fisherman and Queen Fisherette was initiated. With the opening of the brown shrimp season, the traditional spiritual blessings were rendered for a good season's catch and for the safety of the fishermen. Rev. Bronson Bryant of Trinity Episcopal Church, in 1985, stated, *"It's one way of praising God's holy name in a very general way. Some may never go to church and this is where they get close to God."* Rev. Father Ron Herzog of St. Paul's Church, in 1987, stated, *"Death is a sobering thought and the fishermen who face life-threatening situations want to believe a higher authority will intervene. The blessing cements their faith. The sea is so big, and the fisherman's boat is so small."*

Incidentally, the First Deep Sea Rodeo on the Gulf Coast was held in Pass Christian in 1925.

Interested in Ballroom Dancing?

Call Barbara at 1-800-497-5532

Historic Sketches and Short-Story Writers of Pass Christian Area

- "A Short History of Pass Christian" by Betty Carlin, 5 typed pages.
- Untitled Sketch of Pass Christian by Chamber of Commerce, 4 double-spaced, typed pages.
- "As Usual, Pass Christian turns on its Charm", by Lee Ahlswede, 6 double-spaced, typed pages.
- "Pineville-Our Lady of Lourdes" by Diane Farragut, 1 typed page.
- "Tour of Scenic Drive," transcribed tape by Eaton A. Lang, Sr., 1976, 5 typed pages.
- "The Pass Christian Yacht Club", by R.J. and Katy Caire, 3 double-spaced, typed pages.
- "History of Mardi Gras", by Adele Bielenberg, 1 typed page.
- "Pass Harbor - History", by Dayton Robinson, 1 typed page.
- "The Past at the Pass," by M. Sanford and R. Caire, 1980 booklet, 18 half-pages with photos and sketches.
- "Early History of Pass Christian," transcribed tape by Nap Cassibry, 1991, 5 typed pages.
- "History of Pass Christian", transcribed tape by Malcolm Jones, 1991, 8 typed pages.
- "Pass Christian - A Regal Retirement Community", by Dan Ellis, 1 page published in The Sextant, 1994.
- "Vignettes", by Billy Bourdin and Dan Ellis, a series of historical short subjects published in the Progress Newspaper and the Pass Christian Review.
- "A Genealogical View of this Area's Colonial History", by Gloria Moran, 1990, 9 typed pages.
- "Henderson Point", by Dan Ellis, 1 page published in The Sextant, 1994.
- "History of DeLisle and its Missions," by Rev. R.J. Sorin, 1934 booklet, 4 half-pages.
- "History and Momentos of DeLisle", by Murray F. Keel, 6 typed pages, 1997.
- "The Asmard (Knost) House," by Phil Ambler, 2 typed pages.

Going North on Henderson Avenue

Henderson Avenue is one of the major north-south emergency corridors for the city of Pass Christian. It is also the most direct route in west Harrison to reach DeLisle, Vidalia, and Diamondhead. For the record, Henderson becomes *Hampton Road* as it veers north easterly just before reaching the western entrance to *Timber Ridge*. Proceeding northward, the driver encounters three bridges. The first is the *Portage Bridge* which usually has pole or rod-and-reel fishers, therefore requiring the cautious driver to slow from 45 mph to 25-or-so. Besides, slowing for the bridges over the waterways gives the driver the benefit of some wonderful marine vistas and housing developments that one would never know of. The winding roadway through marsh and woodlands passes by *Arcadia Road*, which is another interesting past-time drive in itself.

The next bridge approach is the newest bridge completed in early 1998 and is a high-rising, curving bridge which crosses the *Wolf River*. Looking to the left is the spacious mouth into the *Bay of St. Louis*. Looking to the right one can see the fork where the Wolf River continues northward and the southern fork is *Acadian Bayou*. Then the driver encounters a narrow stretch of roadbed upon low marshy flatlands with the Wolf River coursing along the way on the right and the unseen bay encroaching on the left.

And then, the third bridge crosses *Bayou DeLisle*. The massive *Dedeaux Oaks* are on the point at the left as the road makes a sharp turn to the north through the historic southern section of DeLisle. At the 4-corner Stop-Sign, a decision must be made. The east-west road crossing signifies that to the left is the *Kiln-DeLisle Road* and to the right is simply the *DeLisle Road* which brings the driver to *Menge Avenue* just south of *Bells Ferry Road* and a short distance further north on Menge is Exit 24 to access Interstate 10.

Taking the *Kiln-DeLisle Road* on the left will pursue across Interstate 10 at Exit 20 and allow the driver to continue northward through old *Fenton* and to the crossroads at the *Kiln*. On the other hand, taking Exit 20 at the Interstate will allow the driver quick access to the front entrance of *Diamondhead* at Exit 16.

However, even though the Henderson route is considered an Emergency Corridor, during storms and high tides, the road becomes inundated by flood waters where the driver may confront barricades and detours.

D'Iberville Stone Sterling Silver Replica

On sale now are pendants or brooches which were commissioned by the Tricentennial Committee as a unique and unusual item to commemorate the 300 years since d'Iberville's landing on the Gulf Coast.

After searching many months for a talented local jewelry artist, Tracy Gordon Goff has received the first order of an outstanding ornament for lady's wear which are manufactured by Ellis McDonald of Bay St. Louis.

Tracy can be contacted at 452-5819 while she is making arrangements at retail outlets such as: Hillyer House, Parker's, and Valentino's.

Jazz in the Pass t-shirts -- \$12
all sizes on sale at local banks or
from Chamber of Commerce

Editorial Department

Dan Ellis 452-3138

Dayton Robinson 452-4543

POB 354, Pass Christian, 39571

Please accept this check of \$15 or more for Tricentennial Membership.

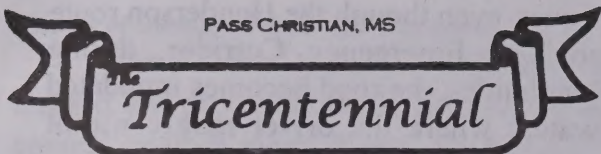
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Calendar of Events Blessing of Fleet Sun, April 25th

T-Shirts available at Local Banks

and in the Pass
Sat. May 8th
Memorial Park